

July 9, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee, Meeting Minutes, July 9, 2009

The Disability Advisory Committee had a virtual meeting to discuss the proposed changes to the approved grant to make our Conference Room more accessible to voters with disabilities.

Persons contacted were:

Kristina Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor
Carolyn Myers, Elections Supervisor
Maurine Coon, AARP/Disability Resources
Sunnie Smith, Manager of an Adult Home
Audrey Jolley, DisAbility Resources
Geri Rister, the ARC
Anita Hopkins, CAP
Bernie Altman, Mental Health Ombudsman
Karla Black, DisAbility Resources
Judy Chamberlin, DisAbility Resources
Linda Jaques, LCCB
Diane Tischer, Wahkiakum County Auditor
Linda Ross, VFW
Linda Wilson, DAV Transportation
Heather Ferguson, Emergency Shelter
Sharon Weinhold, Disability Outreach Advocate

Each member was contacted and given a summary of the original grant request and the revised grant proposal. The members had an opportunity to review/discuss the two options and provide their comments on the revised proposal.

The major difference in the original proposal and the revised grant proposal is the area for observing the election process. Instead of putting windows in one inside wall of the conference room so observers can stand or sit outside the windows and observe the election process, we now propose to install a live feed video/audio system in the conference room. Cameras and microphones installed in the conference room will capture the election process, including ballot processing, ballot counting, and the work of the canvassing board in certifying the election. In addition, mandated election training, such as opening board training, will be recorded.

The video will be available for viewing on 3 new LCD flat panel TV's installed in three key locations of the Administration Building. A 32" TV will be installed in the lobby of

the Elections Department, giving Election's customers the opportunity to view the process and ask questions. A 52" TV will be installed in the deli area. The deli area has comfortable chairs and tables, is well lighted, is right outside the parking area for persons with disabilities, and is very accessible. And, a 52" TV will be installed in the lobby of the Auditor's Office, bringing the process to the attention of waiting customers. The volume on each TV can be adjusted as appropriate for those with hearing impairments.

Both options make the conference room itself more accessible to persons with disabilities so they can participate in the election process, other than as an observer, if they choose.

Disability Advisory Committee members were very enthusiastic about the revised grant proposal. They think it makes participating in the elections process even more accessible to persons with disabilities, and believe it will encourage more people, including people with disabilities, to become involved in the election process.

One member summed it up as being "more people friendly; more comfortable; more accessible." She said it was "a good way to reach more of the community, not just those with disabilities, but anyone with an interest in what is happening in their community."

Another member thought that having a TV in the deli, which is located adjacent to disabled parking and has comfortable seating, will make it easier for persons with disabilities to participate in the elections process. She said, "with these improvements, voters with disabilities and elderly voters will be able to become more knowledgeable of and involved in the election process."

Another member said this is an excellent improvement, and we should make a concerted effort to let people know this is available. And, she observed it is less costly too.

And, another member stated that this approach is "very thoughtful planning and great use of technology."

The members unanimously agreed that the revised grant proposal is the path that the Elections Department should pursue.

Sharon Weinhold, Disability Outreach Advocate

